

December 2003

**Former Palm Springs Landfill
PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA**



Please comment on a plan to clean up the former Palm Springs Landfill

DTSC is one of six
Boards and
Departments
within the
California
Environmental
Protection Agency.
The Department's
mission is to
restore, protect,
and enhance the
environment, to
ensure public
health,
environmental
quality and
economic vitality,
by regulating
hazardous waste,
conducting and
overseeing
cleanups, and
developing and
promoting
pollution
prevention.

State of California



**California
Environmental
Protection Agency**



View of part of the landfill, looking northwest toward Mission Road from San Luis Rey Drive.

We invite you to review and comment on a plan to clean up the former Palm Springs landfill at Ramon Road and Gene Autry Trail in Palm Springs. The cleanup would allow the property owners to develop the site as a commercial center. The cleanup is needed because tests of the soil found some chemicals deep below the surface that could be a danger to construction workers if they are not removed.

Our agency is the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Our mission is to protect human health and the environment. We are overseeing the testing and proposed cleanup of the site to make sure that it is done safely and protects public health.

The cleanup plan, called a draft Removal Action Workplan (RAW), is available for your review and comment from December 17, 2003, through January 20, 2004. We also invite you to review and comment

Public Comment Period

December 17, 2003 through
January 20, 2004

Please review the cleanup proposal and draft Negative Declaration and let us know what you think. Page 3 of this fact sheet tells you where to find the documents and how to send us comments.

on a draft "Negative Declaration." This is our finding that the cleanup actions (such as the digging, hauling, and use of heavy equipment) will not harm the environment or endanger the public.

The cleanup team

The cleanup team includes our agency, the property owners (Geiger, LLC), and their contractors. The property owners are paying all the costs of the project. Their contractors will do the actual cleanup work.

Trash was burned on site and left chemicals in the soil

The former Palm Springs Landfill is about 36 acres in size. It was used for household waste and construction debris from the 1930s until the mid-1960s. During that time the trash was burned in pits on site. This burning created contamination in the soil including lead, dioxins, and furans.

Cleanup is needed to protect future workers at the site

Over the years the former landfill has been tested for chemicals, gases, metals, and other hazardous materials. Soil samples showed elevated levels of lead, dioxins, and furans deep in the soil. The contamination could pose a risk to construction workers who build on the site, or to people who may later work in those buildings.

Not a risk to the public

The lead, dioxins, and furans found in the landfill are at least 10 feet below the surface. They are not a threat to people living or working near the site. No other hazardous amounts of chemicals were found. Samples of the groundwater at the site show that there are no chemicals from the landfill in the water. There also is no indication that the landfill has affected any of the surrounding land, since the chemicals and debris tend to stay in place and do not spread through soil very easily.

Cleanup plan is to clear one area by moving and sealing the waste under parking lot

The plan described in the draft RAW is to excavate (dig up) the buried trash and contaminated soil from one part of the landfill and move it to the central part of the landfill. There it will be

compacted, covered with three feet of clean soil, then paved over and used as a parking lot. The excavated area, once free of buried trash and contaminated soil, would be filled in with clean soil and graded before construction.

Other cleanup options we looked at were: 1) taking no action; 2) taking the soil and trash off site to be disposed of; and 3) mixing the soil and trash with cement to seal it in place and leaving it where it is. The first option is not acceptable because it does not protect human health and the environment. The second and third options were not chosen because they would not be cost effective.

Length of the cleanup

The cleanup project is expected to take about four months.

Dealing with dust, air quality, and safety during cleanup

Here are some of the actions we would take to protect nearby residents and the cleanup crew:

- Spray the soil with water to keep dust down
- Use plastic sheets to cover any dug-up soil left in place overnight
- Test the air at the site to make sure the amount of dust stays at a safe level
- Place special filters on the bulldozers and other heavy equipment to keep the air emissions (exhaust) at safe levels
- Put up a fence around the site during cleanup to keep children and other residents away from heavy equipment.

All cleanup activities will comply with city, county, and state regulations. The property owners will get all the required permits for the project. Air quality controls will meet standards set by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD).

Where to find the draft RAW and draft Negative Declaration

The documents are available at the Cathedral City Public Library, 33520 Date Palm Drive, Cathedral City, (760) 328-4262, and at our office at 1011 North Grandview Avenue in Glendale. Call Jone Barrio, File Room Coordinator, at (818) 551-2952 to make an appointment to see them. You can also view them on our web site at www.dtsc.ca.gov.

How to send comments

Send written comments, postmarked or emailed by January 20, 2004, to

Stephen Cutts
DTSC Project Manager
1011 North Grandview Ave
Glendale, CA 91201
email: scutts@dtsc.ca.gov

What happens next

Once the comment period is over, we will evaluate all the comments we received during that time, incorporate them as appropriate, and approve the final cleanup plan (RAW). Once we have done this, the cleanup can begin.

The final RAW will include a written response to every comment. We will place the final RAW in the Cathedral City Library, and mail a copy of the Response to Comments to everyone who sent us a written comment.

Who to contact for more information

Stephen Cutts
Project Manager
(818) 551-2178
email: scutts@dtsc.ca.gov

Kim Foreman
Public Participation Specialist
(714) 484-5324
email: kforeman@dtsc.ca.gov

For Media Inquiries:

Jeanne Garcia, (818) 551-2176
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Notice to the Hearing Impaired: For more information, you may use the California State Relay Service at 1(888) 877-5378 (TDD). Ask them to contact Stephen Cutts, Project Manager, at (818) 551-2178.